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Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall, Conference Room 2
Wednesday, February 13, 2013
7pm

Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Carl Brauer, Barbara Watson, Jirair Hovsepian, Julie Cicalese, Regina O'Brien, Rachel Rennard, Paul Solomon

Belmont High School Liaison: Daniel Vernick

Belmont Police Liaison: N/A

Belmont Against Racism: Charlene O'Connor

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10pm.

January Minutes: Carl moved to accept the minutes, Jerry seconded. All in favor.

Phone Line Report and Assignments:

- ^ January: Julie had nothing to report.
- ^ Regina to cover February; Barbara to cover March.

Town Website Photo Collage: Barbara contacted the office of the Board of Selectman; no news yet.

Social Media Use: Regina to continue to research and understand how we can make it work. She will reach out to Bobby Reardon, who was recently hired as a social media specialist. (Reference: <http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2013/02/10/belmont-hires-social-media-spokesman/PPRJkqHGVWRnSJcKDvjdN/story.html>)

Town Practice of Recognizing Holidays: Daniel reached out to the Town regarding holiday practices, which are observed for logistic reasons only. Holidays are mentioned on the town website only to inform the public about closings, etc.

Future Initiatives: Paul requested that we focus on strategic planning for the HRC in 2013 in the January meeting. Kathryn had shared that BAR was looking for another group to take over the MLK Breakfast, which could be considered a good match for our search for an initiative.

Belmont Against Racism MLK Breakfast: Charlene has shared that BAR is looking for a group to take over the annual breakfast, as the individuals who have been running it are looking for a new focus regarding their social justice activism. They want to continue the legacy of great speakers, and the fundraising component to fund the late bus for METCO participants. "Bus" is

now a coordinated taxi or van service. The support of the bus program has created the opportunity for Belmont residents to engage directly with the Boston inner city. Seven members of the board plan and execute the breakfast; additional volunteers on the day-of. Understanding is that some members may remain to work certain aspects of the breakfast, including coordinating donations. Charlene has the logistics written down regarding planning the breakfast throughout the year; has shared that it could be rethought in execution. The fundraising also supports other efforts to incorporate METCO children into the Belmont community. Numbers this year were lower than previous years, so there is an opportunity to revitalize the event in time for the 20th anniversary in 2014. Paul believes that the event is one of the best community events in Belmont, with a diverse participation. The community wants the event to continue.

Carl asked questions about the fundraising arm; Barbara shared that she talked to Kathryn to understand the budget and would learn more about the engagement survey results at the BAR meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 14, 2013.

Group agreed that we are strongly interested in continuing this event; Barbara will share this information w/ BAR and request a scoping meeting so that we have all of the information available so we can get to a vote.

Additional Paths for Communication: Rachel wanted to explore us being added to the Town Website Contact Us dropdown so that people would have another way to contact us.

Checking In With the Community: Rachel asked how we can check in with the community regarding their concerns and if people feel comfortable in Belmont.

Community March: Jerry shared that he was thinking about a march to get more people involved; we could consider incorporating that into the MLK Breakfast.

Other Events:

Foundation for Belmont Education: 20th anniversary dinner coming up at the Belmont Hill School as a fundraising activity, scheduled for March 16th. More information here: <http://www.fbe-belmont.org/news-events/>

Liaison Reports:

Belmont Police: No report.

Adjourned: Carl moved to adjourn the meeting, Regina seconded, all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Next Meeting: March 7, 2013, at 7pm

Respectfully submitted by Regina O'Brien